



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Hampshire*

*Federal Building
55 Pleasant Street, Room 312
Concord, New Hampshire 03301*

603/225-1552

MEDIA RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
September 26, 2003**

Contact:

**Thomas P. Colantuono
United States Attorney
Joseph N. Laplante
Assistant U.S. Attorney
(603) 225-1562 x 230**

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

WEARE MAN SENTENCED ON FEDERAL WEAPON CHARGE

Re: United States v. Stephen LaBranche

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Resident Agent in Charge Kraig Hankins announced that Steven LABRANCHE, DOB 10/4/69, of Weare, New Hampshire, was sentenced on September 26, 2003, on the charge of being in unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition after being convicted of a domestic violence crime.

On March 27, 2003, LABRANCHE entered a guilty plea to the charge before U.S. District Judge Steven J. McAuliffe. A convicted domestic violence abuser, LABRANCHE illegally possessed a Ruger .22 caliber rifle and rounds of ammunition in several calibers at his Weare home in June, 2002. The weapon was discovered by his Hillsborough County Probation Officer during a supervisory search of LABRANCHE's home after his conviction for assaulting his former girlfriend. Federal law prohibits individuals convicted of domestic violence assault from purchasing or possessing firearms.

At today's sentencing, Judge McAuliffe imposed a sentence of three years probation, with the first eight months to be served under home confinement. During this eight-month period, LaBranche will be monitored via an electronic bracelet, and will not be permitted to leave his home except to work. His behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Department of Probation. LaBranche was also fined \$500.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated, "Prosecuting convicted domestic violence abusers for illegally possessing firearms is one of the main goals of both the federal firearms laws and Project Safe Neighborhoods. This office is committed to aggressively pursuing these cases, and will continue to work with federal, state, and local authorities to do so."

The investigation of LABRANCHE, part of the Department of Justice's "Project Safe Neighborhoods" (PSN) initiative, was conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The prosecution was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph N. Laplante.